



## Instructions for persons under home-based quarantine

**Quarantine** is used when a person is possibly infected with a disease but is not yet symptomatic. **Isolation** applies to patients with symptoms of infectious disease.

The Chief Epidemiologist is authorized to take such measures according to article 12 of the [Act on Health Security and Communicable Diseases](#)

### Quarantine:

As of August 19, 2020, all travellers from [risk areas](#) who enter Iceland are again obligated to go into quarantine, regardless of duration of the intended stay in Iceland or purpose of the visit.

Travellers are registered in quarantine using the [pre-registration form](#) before or on arrival. The registration information is collected in a database which is the responsibility of the Chief Epidemiologist and made available to the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management responsible for enforcing quarantine.

In this and other documents relating to quarantine in Iceland, the phrase “home-based quarantine” refers to quarantine outside of official quarantine facilities, whether in a home or hotel, or other accommodation fulfilling the [requirements for quarantine housing](#). “Home” likewise refers to the base of quarantine, whether or not it is the permanent residence of the quarantined individual.

This document is written for the public with established connections in Icelandic society who quarantine in their usual domicile but rules described in this document apply to all individuals in quarantine in Iceland. A [separate document](#) is specifically intended for visitors who are in quarantine in temporary accommodations in an unfamiliar country.

Full quarantine duration is 14 days. There are some important differences in the rules for travel related quarantine compared to quarantine due to known contact with a person with COVID-19.

Individuals with a confirmed prior COVID-19 infection in Iceland or antibodies measured in Iceland are exempted from quarantine and screening. Test results or certificates regarding antibodies need to be sent to the contact tracing team.

- **Quarantine related to travel** from risk area can be **shortened** by undergoing PCR testing for diagnosis of COVID-19 on arrival and again on day 5 of quarantine. Day 1 is then the day after the first test. If a 14-day quarantine is chosen upon arrival that quarantine cannot be shortened later by taking a test. A positive test leading to a diagnosis of active COVID-19 infection will lead to [isolation](#) of the affected party and quarantine of contacts.
- **Quarantine for COVID-19 exposure** is 14 days from last possible exposure/ transmission or until symptoms appear, but if symptoms appear and an infection is confirmed by laboratory testing please follow [instructions regarding isolation](#). Quarantine may be increased if additional exposure occurs (e.g. another family member

is diagnosed with the disease). Quarantine can be **shortened** for asymptomatic individuals by undergoing a PCR screening test after 7 days. If the virus is not detected the quarantine is lifted. The next 7 days the individual still needs to pay special attention to hygiene and basic infection control and avoid contact with vulnerable groups. This test is free of charge to the individual. If the test is positive the individual is contacted by telephone and rules of isolation apply. If you are in quarantine in the same place as an infected individual quarantine cannot be shortened and you should not present for testing unless you have kept complete separation from the infected individual for 7 days.

#### **Regarding households with children where not everyone is in quarantine:**

- If the children in the household are not mature enough or capable of adhering to the measures required for part of the household to be in quarantine, then the entire household should be in quarantine or those that do not need to be in quarantine should go elsewhere. Possibly one parent/caregiver can be in quarantine with a child but the other parent/caregiver keep distance. A parent with a child in quarantine does not need to be registered in quarantine and the parent does not need to go for testing to shorten the quarantine to 7 days from 14 days. It is sufficient that the child is registered in quarantine and goes for testing. This applies to e.g. children in daycare.
- Children who are mature enough to be independent regarding their own hygiene (e.g. separate bathroom) and keep distance from the parents/caregivers (and others) that are in quarantine, as well as their peers at school, can continue to attend school. E.g. if a parent is in quarantine a child in daycare might need to be in quarantine as well but an older sibling might not need to be.
- Parents of older children in quarantine after exposure in school or free-time who can keep distance from the children during quarantine can continue to attend their workplace if distance working is not possible.

#### **At onset of home-based quarantine, the following should be reviewed by the person concerned:**

- Detailed information on infection pathways and symptoms of the COVID-19 infection can be found on the website of the [Directorate of Health](#).
  - Contact and droplet contamination spread the disease. This means that there is risk of spreading the virus when an infected person sneezes, coughs or blows their nose, and a healthy person inhales these droplets or they land on their hands and they then touch their eyes, nose or mouth. Quarantined individuals need to pay special attention to hand hygiene.
  - Masks and/or gloves may be appropriate during quarantine when contact with others is unavoidable, but can only be supplementary to the restrictions imposed by this quarantine procedure.
- It is preferred that individuals in the household that have not been exposed not be in the same place as the quarantined person. However, persons in the same household who share an exposure can be quarantined together in the same place, risking prolonging their quarantine if COVID-19 illness occurs in the household.

- If non-exposed individuals do not want to leave the household they should limit contact with the quarantined person as much as possible (at least the quarantined person should have her/his own bathroom, sleep in a private bedroom or at least a separate bed). **If the quarantined individual then falls ill, the other household members must be quarantined.**
- Contact with other people must be strictly limited. Therefore, a quarantined individual may need assistance with necessities.
  - **If some members** of the household are quarantined, other household members can continue with their daily tasks and provide necessities for the household.
  - If the **whole** household is quarantined, friends or relatives can assist with necessities and leave at the front door.
  - If delivery of food and other necessities is available in the area, this service can be utilized during quarantine. The quarantined individual should make clear upon ordering that he/she is in quarantine and the delivery should be left outside the front door.
  - Anyone that is unexpectedly quarantined in Iceland without other resources can contact the Red Cross helpline at 1717 (+354 580 1710 for foreign numbers) or online at [www.1717.is](http://www.1717.is). There you can ask for assistance, get support or information and talk to someone in confidence. The helpline is open 24/7 and is free of charge.
- It is important to practice routine hygiene measures to reduce the risk and spread of infection (see guidelines on [hand hygiene](#) and infection prevention on the Directorate of Health's website).
- Individuals in quarantine due to known contact with COVID-19 should measure and record his/her body temperature daily.
- If a quarantined individual becomes symptomatic with COVID-19, she/he should contact their primary care provider or Laeknavaktin-on call service by phone at 1700 (+354 544 4113 for foreign numbers) for further guidance. Common symptoms include:
  - Respiratory symptoms, especially cough and difficulty breathing. Cold symptoms (runny or stuffy nose) and a sore throat are also common.
  - Fever
  - Weakness/fatigue
  - Headache and musculoskeletal pain
  - Gastrointestinal symptoms may occur
  - Sudden changes in the sense of smell or taste are less common but characteristic of COVID-19
- If a quarantined individual suffers from an acute illness and needs ambulance transport to hospital, the 112 dispatcher should be notified of a possible COVID-19 infection.
- A person under quarantine should stay in their home and have contact with as few people as possible.
  - Quarantined individuals **may** leave their home to seek necessary health care services, **after** consulting with a primary care clinic/1700 (+354 544 4113)/112.

Routine medical or dental check-ups, attending physiotherapy or visits to specialists that are not related to the COVID-19 illness are not considered essential health care while in quarantine and all such services should be rescheduled. **If illness (COVID-19 or other) or an accident occurs while in quarantine and medical attention is required, the person who contacts the primary care clinic, 1700 (+354 544 4113) or 112 should notify the responder of the quarantine.** This allows the responder to arrange the necessary precautions for the medical staff involved in providing care, **but should NOT delay or inhibit access to necessary healthcare.**

- Quarantined individual must not use public transport but they [may use taxis](#). If they need to seek necessary health care services, they may also use a private car if they, or someone that is also quarantined in the household, are able to drive, otherwise assistance should be sought by calling 1700 (+354 544 4113)/112.
- Those in quarantine due to exposure who intend to get tested after 7 days to shorten duration of quarantine need to leave their base of quarantine for the test but should return there after the test to await the result.
- On arrival it may be necessary to travel to a base of quarantine remote from the point of entry into Iceland. If quarantine duration is longer than the visit to Iceland, the same applies upon departure.
- Quarantined individuals must not attend school or work where others attend. **A certificate of quarantine for individuals who reside in Iceland can be obtained with electronic identification through [www.heilsuvera.is](http://www.heilsuvera.is) or by email from the Directorate of Health.** Employers have been instructed to be considerate if an employee needs to be quarantined for unavoidable reasons.
- Quarantined individual **must not** attend any gatherings, for work, family or social life. For example, work meetings or gatherings, union meetings, confirmations, weddings, wakes, home-based social gatherings, choir rehearsal, concerts, etc.
- Individuals who are in quarantine after travel prompted by a death of a close family member or friend in Iceland may be able to attend funeral services, if they follow the [separate instructions](#) for conduct during the services. If they have undergone testing at the border it is prudent to wait for a negative result of at least the first test before attending services. Individuals in quarantine due to contact with COVID-19 **cannot** attend funeral services.
- Quarantined individuals **must not** themselves go out for supplies, i.e. to the pharmacy, the grocery store, the post office, bank, etc.
- Quarantined individuals **must not** visit restaurants, bars, fitness centers, swimming pools, theaters, cinemas, shopping malls, or other places where people come together.
- Quarantined individuals **must not** stay in shared condominium space, i.e. stairwell, laundry rooms, or shared yards/outdoor areas.
- Quarantined individuals **may not** welcome guests in the home during quarantine.
- Children whose parents are in quarantine **can** attend school and they can leave the house but they **cannot** have guests over.

- Individuals in quarantine **can** use shared condominium stairwells and entrances (e.g. on their way in and out from a walk) but they **cannot** stay there and they need to keep at least 2 m distance from others. Preferably an individual in quarantine should use the stairs rather than an elevator but if he/she needs to use the elevator then he/she should not share the elevator with others. Hand hygiene is very important and common surfaces such as elevator buttons should be sanitized by the individual in quarantine after they are touched.
- Quarantined individuals **can** go out on a balcony or garden that is for their private use.
- Quarantined individuals **can** go for a walk in the vicinity of their base of quarantine but need to keep at least 2 m distance from other pedestrians.
- Quarantined individuals **can** take out domestic trash, but need to consider hygiene, such as handwashing before and after opening the garbage chute/trashcan/trash room and preferably wipe common surfaces such as handles, handrails, elevator buttons with 70% alcohol or other disinfectants after contact.